

December 2025

Remuera, Auckland, New Zealand

Next Meeting:

Monday 8th December 2025 at 10am

Venue:

St Chads Church, 38 St Johns Road, Remuera

Principal Speaker:

James Duncan, “Infant Sparks.” This is the 1st of three talks being the story behind the arrival of electric trams in Auckland – the trials, tribulations, tragedies, battles, and successes of bringing what was then “space-age” technology to NZ’s largest city. The story is brought to life with a large number of digital images, many rare and not seen previously of this revolutionary form of street transport – this large vehicle that could propel itself along as if by magic, without horses or a steam engine in front!”

Christmas morning tea:

All members of u3a Remuera are welcome

Meeting Tasks:

Greeters: NZ History
Morning Tea: Current Affairs
(Convenor of Current Affairs, please contact Raewyn Bluck
021 029 56919 to confirm duties and time.)

James Duncan grew up in Auckland during the 1960s and 1970s when Auckland was served by a large and extensive electric trolley bus system. These vehicles fascinated him as a child and thus began a



passion for electric street transport. At age 15 he joined the Tramway Division at MOTAT and has now been an active volunteer member of the tramway for 49 years. He’s packed a lot into his 49 years at MOTAT – he’s been a tram conductor, managed MOTAT’s tram system for many years, he’s a motor examiner, issuing tram drivers’ licences, and even wrote the guide by which all MOTAT tram drivers are trained. Most of his working life was spent in retail, but in 2011 he was asked to take on managing the

operation of the new tramway down in Wynyard Quarter.



Today, together with this role, and a full-time position at MOTAT looking after the infrastructure for the MOTAT Tramway, he says he is now like a pig in mud!

May your Christmas be filled with love and laughter. ~ Anon

President's Message



Greetings to all u3a members

I can't believe that Xmas and the end of the year are almost upon us. My year as your President has simply flown by, and I'm happy to hand over to Laurence Melton the reins of office. As Vice President this past year, Laurence has engaged the excellent speakers that u3a members have enjoyed. Incoming Vice President, Karen Yates, has already lined up some exceptional speakers for 2026. I strongly urge every member to continue attending the monthly meetings to hear these speakers, but also to remain after the tea break to hear from the mini-talk speakers from within the club. It's from these members that we get to hear what the groups within u3a are about. If they've taken trouble to prepare a mini-talk, it's up to us to give our support and hear what they have to say!

As mentioned in my report at the recent AGM I've been supported by a great committee and am delighted that many have continued in office. However, I urge all members to be prepared to take office and contribute to the efficient running of this organisation. We're hoping that someone will step forward and volunteer to take over the role of Convenor of Study Groups which Wallis Walker has done for several years. She is more than happy to pass on her expertise in this role.

Remuera u3a has supported the DUFFY Books in Homes scheme for many years. Laura & Rainsford Horrocks have taken over from Piers and Elaine Davies who've done a great job in the past. Thank you to all who have contributed to this worthwhile scheme.

Earlier this year I put out a call from the refugee centre for sewing machines, and several of you responded. I make the call again; please contact Jessica Hall on 0212762804.

Finally, (and this is my last piece to you all) do come to the Xmas gathering on December 8th. We have an entertaining speaker lined up, and festive fare to follow. Past President Raewyn Bluck is in charge of catering and Foodies members are making Xmas cakes. So do come along and enjoy fellowship, chat with fellow members, and commence the crazy run-up to Christmas.

On behalf of the committee, our best wishes to you and your family for a wonderful Christmas season and may you all have a peaceful and joyful New Year.

Alison Ross

Director of Studies

Wallis has agreed to continue in this role while we find a new Director of Studies.

Many thanks to all the Convenors and Deputy Convenors for all their sterling service to our u3a throughout the year. They are invited to a thank you function on Sunday 14th December 4 – 6 pm at the home of President Alison Ross.

At our first meeting for 2026, 9th February, convenors will speak briefly about their study group and recruit new members for them. The morning tea break is the time to add names and contact details to lists. The visiting speaker will be from 11.00 am.

Best wishes for the festive season and holiday break.

Wallis Walker

Christmas isn't a season. It's a feeling. ~ Edna Ferber

Group Reports

Travel Study Group

Virtual tours of Iceland, Japan during cherry blossom time, UK staying at universities and no single supplement, Chatham Islands have all been part of this year's programme. Members share their travel



experiences and we learn tips for safe and successful travel. We studied the benefits and drawbacks of the Sims for cell phones while overseas and using Wise cards for currency while travelling. Having most of our meetings in the Logan Campbell Village theatre adds to the comfort of meetings and the quality of visuals.

Members are welcome to join us for travel adventures.

4th Tuesday of the month 2 – 4 pm.

Contact the Convenor, Wallis Walker, at wallis.walker@xtra.co.nz

Science Around Us Study Group

The Science Around Us group (SARUS) continues to thrive. SARUS meets every 4th Monday at Grace Joel Retirement Village. We currently have 22 members and most meetings are attended by 15-20 of



us. Our talks are usually pitched at a level that non-scientists can follow and are jargon-free. Our focus is on satisfying our curiosity about the natural world. Meetings usually begin with a talk of 30-45 minutes given by one of our members, followed by morning tea and then brief items that members bring along. Our main topics this year have included fungi, the beauty and elegance of prime numbers, greenhouse gases, water, and the construction of the Manapouri power station. Short talks have told us how polar bears keep warm, storing potatoes, whether storks deliver babies, and why 42 is the answer to the meaning of life, the universe, and everything.

Convenors: Dennis Rose merryndennis@gmail.com and John Malcomson johngmalc@gmail.com

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS

u3a Remuera welcomes Tina Raines and Marquita Geerlings as new members this month. We hope you will explore one or more of the study groups and find your experience fulfilling as well as meet new friends.

What I like about Christmas is that you can make people forget the past with the present.

~ Don Marquis

What's every parent's favourite Christmas Carol? Silent Night.

REMINDER – SUBSCRIPTIONS OVERDUE

For the few who have not yet paid

Please pay your annual subscription for the financial year
1st October 2025 to 30th September 2026.

Please pay fifty-five dollars (\$55.00)

The account name (Payee) is **U3A Remuera Incorporated**

The account number is 12 3030 0469700 00

Please put your surname with your initial as the reference.

If you do not wish to continue your membership, please advise either:

Lynn Bartram - lynnbartram3@gmail.com or Karin Hulme - khulme@xtra.co.nz

AGM 2025

90 members and visitors attended the Annual General Meeting on Monday 10th November.

In her report, the President Alison Ross, highlighted the growth of u3a Remuera over the past year particularly the increase in attendance at monthly meetings. She attributed this to the high calibre of speakers who have addressed the meetings and thanked Dr Laurence Melton for arranging the speakers list. Alison also thanked her committee for their ongoing commitment and support for ensuring the smooth running of the organisation.

The President was delighted to announce new representatives for the DUFFY BOOKS IN HOMES at Waima School, Hokianga, as Laura and Rainsford Horrocks.

Alison thanked the committee members leaving, Wallis Walker, Gillian West, Jackie Humphrey and Raewyn Bluck. She noted that Karin Hulme and Lynn Bartram will be leaving the committee at the end of April 2026.

The Treasurer's report, presented by Karin Hulme, showed income of \$14,283 and Expenditure of \$11,294 resulting in a surplus of \$2,989. However, the surplus included subscriptions for the 2025/26 financial year of \$3,470. Therefore, the organisation incurred a loss of \$481 for the financial year which is the reason for the increase in the annual subscription. The Treasurer's Report was accepted and approved.

The meeting approved the resolution to amend Clause 3.3(1) of the Constitution.

The new committee was elected: Dr Laurence Melton (President), Karen Yates (Vice president), Lynn Bartram (Membership Secretary), Karin Hulme (Treasurer), Lorraine Jackson (Secretary), Alison Ross (Almoner), Kushlan Sugathapala (Website Management), Susan Madarasz (Hospitality Convenor), Peter Buckland (Newsletter Editor), Lakshman Abeynaike (Treasurer from May 2026).

The Director of Studies position is still to be filled.

Of Interest?

Lynn Bartram, our Membership Secretary, reports that u3a Remuera now has around 144 members. On average 73 members and 7 visitors have attended the Monday general meetings during 2025. This is an increase of 20% over 2024 and a 48% increase over 2023.



Ten Foodies enjoyed a morning & lunch at Kelmarna Community Gardens last week. Founded 40 years ago, & comprising over 4 acres of sloping land in the heart of Ponsonby, it's an oasis of edible cultivation. Staffed mainly by volunteers, but with paid staff too, it was a hive of activity. Not only are vegetables grown on a large scale, but flowers too, as well as a bee hive, chickens & half a dozen sheep. Well worth a visit!

Looking Back

Troy Churton's talk, "Retirement Villages, Fishhooks and Key Issues for Reform," related his experiences working for and with the Retirement Commissioner over the past eleven years. Currently, he provides independent consulting services to the Retirement Village Association, a consumer group representing retirement village residents, and is regularly asked to facilitate in retirement village complaint situations.

A snapshot of the RV sector: 41,111 units across 470 villages accommodating 53,444 residents (2023). The JLL White Paper (JLL is a Real Estate Consultancy) estimates the number of residents will increase to more than 77,000 by 2033. Auckland has the most RV villages with an average 119 units per village. 63% of villages have a co-located care facility. The latter are within the 40,359 care beds across the 672 aged residential care facilities in New Zealand. It is estimated that 13% to 14% of people aged 75+ choose to live in a RV.



The financial model used by RVs is an investor and property developer driven model, wrapped in a value proposition of elderly social housing and care. Occupation in a RV is through an Occupational Rights Agreement (ORA) also called a Licence to Occupy (LTO).

Following many complaints, the Ministry of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), has prepared a Review of the Retirement Villages Act of 2003. There are three policy priorities:

1. Repayment of capital to residents and/or their families in a timely manner;
2. Operators paying to repair and replace chattels they own;
3. Changes in the Complaints System Process.

There is an expectation this review may go to a Parliamentary Select Committee later in 2025.

Finally, he suggested prospective RV residents should conduct a thorough due diligence, look around at the various offerings provided by different villages, speak to existing residents about their experience in a particular village and be clear that one knows what one wants and expects from a village operator.

The mini talk by Peter Buckland entitled “Being Human in the 21st Century” looked at the impact and effect which artificial intelligence has on the lives of people today. His talk was prompted by a NZ Herald headline “AI wrongly names Rich-Lister.” He wondered whether all people could be vulnerable to being wrongly identified by an AI generated article. Drawing on an article from IBM Think, he identified 10 issues with AI which should caution all AI users as information could be wrong or misleading. “Taking all of the positive and negative opinions about AI, its not going away. We need to adapt ourselves to recognise it, use it as we see fit and most importantly recognise its shortcomings. The only solution (he) suggested is for one to use one’s discernment.”

Notice Board

Future Speakers

9th February 2026 - Ross Blair, “Nature vs Nurture”

9th March 2026 – James Duncan, “Always a Tram in Sight”

Key Contacts

President	Laurence Melton	l.melton@auckland.ac.nz
Vice President	Karen Yates	karenay@xtra.co.nz
Director of Studies	TBC	
Almoner	Alison Ross	ea.ross@xtra.co.nz
Membership Secretary	Lynn Bartram	lynnbartram3@gmail.com
Treasurer	Karin Hulme	khulme@xtra.co.nz

Email Address

u3aRemuera@gmail.com

Website

<https://remuerau3a.org.nz/>

Study Groups

<https://remuerau3a.org.nz/study-groups/>



u3a Remuera meets at St Chads Church, Meadowbank on 2nd Monday of the month at 10am. u3a provides a place for those in the 3rd stage of their life journey, to come together in their local community, a chance to socialise, a chance to participate in interest groups, to learn something new and keep the mind active.

Editor: Peter Buckland, contact peterlbuckland@outlook.com 0274 764873

